

# **EXHIBIT 17**

# COLUMBIA SPECTATOR

---

Online Edition | September 7, 2005

## Opinion

### STAFF EDITORIAL: A Welcome Distraction

*CU Community connects students with new friends and faces.*

January 29, 2004

Last summer, TimeOut New York gave two thumbs up to online dating, assuring the hipster public that it was socially acceptable to have accounts at sites like Friendster, Hot or Not, and Match.com. Over the winter holidays, Engineering Student Council Internal Vice President Adam Goldberg, ESC '06, gave Columbia undergraduates their own such site: CUCommunity.com, an online forum in which students may make friends, post artwork, and keep a weblog.

Part soapbox, part confession booth, and part photo album, the site offers hours of distraction to bored students. Most students log onto CU Community for light entertainment: they use it to chat with old friends and perhaps meet some new ones.

Columbia students should not underestimate the potential of CU Community, however. Slowly, subtly, it has begun to bring undergraduates together as never before. They may be talking about subjects as insignificant as Outkast albums and grilled cheese, but they are talking to each other. Strangers are leaving greetings on each other's pages; online acquaintances are getting together at Koronet; seniors are complimenting the photographs of first-years. Goldberg and his colleagues should be commended for using the Internet--a medium that so often isolates people--to create a new sense of unity among Columbia undergraduates.

CU Community is already very popular. More than 1,200 students--approximately 16 percent of the total undergraduate population at Columbia--hold accounts on it. The site receives approximately 1,500 unique visits per day, and about 50 members log on to the site every hour. Members fill the "Spectaculars" area of the site with happy comments. For example, Jarod Were, SEAS '07, wrote, "During my brief period at CU Community, I have already met around 25-30 people who I wouldn't have met otherwise." An exuberant Jax Russo, CC '04, joked, "I met my husband on CU Community ... our love blossomed, and a marriage quickly

followed. THANKS CU Community!"

CU Commu-nity has not, to our knowledge, led to any actual marriages between members, but it has already made an impact on campus life. It has connected people through mutual friends and interests; it has allowed old friends and classmates to keep in touch. It provides a forum where all students may have a voice--where else on campus is this truly the case?

In addition, CU Community is a pleasure to navigate. Aesthetically slick, simple to explore, and relatively bug-free, the site is a masterpiece of web programming. Students accessing CU Community for the first time are treated to a gorgeous Flash introduction, designed by Goldberg and set to "Life in Mono," the Mono song from the Great Expectations soundtrack.

We congratulate Goldberg and the council on a job well done and encourage more Columbia undergraduates to log on to CU Community. It's a bit of light fun and a welcome distraction from the stress of schoolwork. Beyond this, however, the site has a more important purpose: it brings students together in a community, however virtual. It is perhaps the most socializing force that Columbia has seen in recent years.

^ Back To Top Columbia Spectator Online Edition © 2005 Spectator Publishing Company. All Right Reserved. |  
Accessibility

Advertise on the New Digital Group College Newspaper Network